

## **CNGR Opening Statement**

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, we are grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today and on behalf of the 1.1 million National Guard and Reservists that we support and represent as the Assistants to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard and Reserve Matters. We thank you for your service on this commission.

We agree with many of the findings addressed in the Sense of Congress section of the congressional findings issued with the Guard Empowerment Act; specifically, those that support greater integration of the National Guard, both operationally and in policy, resources, and requirements processes within the Pentagon. We also agree with many of the findings and recommendations the Commission made in its second report to Congress on 1 March 2007.<sup>1</sup>

We believe all the Services' Reserve Components can achieve higher levels of integration across the Total Force. We need one Army, one Marine Corps, one Navy, and one Air Force to defend these great United States both at home and abroad.

We don't feel the National Guard or Reserves should be any different or separate from the Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marines. We believe that the full spectrum of missions assigned to the Guard and Reserves be fully represented in the planning, equipping, training, and resourcing of the Total Force.

The National Guard and Reserves have been utilized as an operational reserve in the last decade. However, as your second report to Congress indicates, this Operational

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<sup>1</sup> Commission on the National Guard and Reserves – Strengthening America's Defenses in the New Security Environment. Second Report to Congress, March 1, 2007.

Reserve may not be sustainable over time<sup>2</sup>, largely because it exists within the structures and constraints of policies and institutions, many of which have not been updated since shortly after World War II.<sup>3</sup> We must work to make it sustainable through thoughtful changes in policy and law. Recently, many have even questioned the basic concept and feasibility of an Operational Reserve. We believe that an Operational Reserve is both feasible and sound in serving our nation's defense needs. However, our definition of an Operational Reserve, which we will provide later, differs somewhat from how we have heard others describe it.

Given that many of the National Guard and Reserve structures were established well before Goldwater-Nichols, before combatant commands, and especially before our reliance on the Reserve Components as more of an operational reserve than a strategic one, it is appropriate to look carefully at how they are organized, resourced, trained, and equipped. The ongoing transformation of the National Guard and Reserves is driven by the requirements of the "Long War" at home and abroad. To win this Long War, we must have the right kind of force; one we can sustain and afford while preserving the will of the American people. We are now 5 years removed from 9/11; and still the Guard and Reserves are short many of the resources required for the protection and safety of the citizenry.

In the Guard and Reserves, we clearly understand the asymmetrical threats posed to the Homeland Security environment. We must be prepared to deal with hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, other natural disasters, border security, as well as the threat of

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<sup>2</sup> Commission on the National Guard and Reserves – Strengthening America's Defenses in the New Security Environment. Second Report to Congress, March 1, 2007. page x.

<sup>3</sup> Commission on the National Guard and Reserves – Strengthening America's Defenses in the New Security Environment. Second Report to Congress, March 1, 2007. page vii.

terrorism that are all laid out in the Homeland Security Council's 15 planning scenarios.

The American people expect that their military can and will respond promptly and professionally during any crisis at home. They also expect that we conduct detailed planning for domestic responses before they occur.

Your Commission's work will ensure the optimum use of Guard and Reserve capabilities both at home and abroad. The answers to these questions will require the Federal, State, and local Governments, civilian and military, to consider, or re-consider, the role of the Guard and Reserves in the Total Force.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Commission, thank you for providing us the opportunity to speak with you today.